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## **The Cape Region is ready for the summer season**

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Officials say 40,000 to 50,000 people are expected each day of Memorial Day weekend in Rehoboth Beach, and the resort area is ready.

In Rehoboth, roadwork is finished for the crowds that will pound the new and improved pavement. The Bandstand is still under construction but should be finished in June, said Rehoboth Beach City Manager Greg Ferrese.

Safety patrols are also ready for beach- and bar-bound tourists.

Law enforcement agencies have been gearing up for months, and they're well prepared, officials said. Safety on the beaches is also being stepped up for the summer season, beginning with Memorial Day weekend.

Rehoboth Beach Patrol has about 70 lifeguards this year, and they're all ready for action, said Capt. Kent Buckson.

"There's a lot of excitement this time of year. We haven't seen each other all winter, so it's a type of reunion," Buckson said. "It's time to get back out there to do the job we love."

Dewey Beach Patrol will be out in full force beginning Memorial Day weekend on Saturday, May 27. "We're expecting to start off with a big bang," said Beach Patrol Capt. Todd Fritchman. **He warned that a steep drop off created by last year's beach replenishment project will continue to be a source of concern this year.**

In Dewey Beach, there are 46 lifeguards for the 2006 season, including two paramedics, Fritchman said. The team provides emergency services for the entire town, including homes, restaurants, motels and bars, he said.

Fritchman said in Dewey, **training for cervical spine injuries – injuries to the neck and back - has been stepped up because those injuries were so prevalent last season.**

**"We're concerned about those c-spine injuries and we anticipate them continuing," Fritchman said.**

**C-spine injuries are on a sharp rise nationwide, Fritchman said. In response Dewey Beach is posting signs on all guard stands to beware of shoreline conditions and to contact a lifeguard for more information.**

**Signage and outreach education is likely to help, Fritchman said.**

**Cuts and scrapes from large shells and rocks are also expected to continue this year, he said.**

**"Cobble and shale are so abrasive - it's conducive to lacerations," Fritchman said.**

Rehoboth Beach and Dewey Beach patrols work 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays, and Rehoboth guards the beaches until 5:30 p.m. on holidays and weekends until Labor Day.

Rehoboth Beach police hired more seasonal officers than ever, Chief Keith Banks said. “We are ready to go with extra officers,” he said. The police department expects a safe, friendly and clean weekend, Banks said.

With 24 seasonal staff, one assistant detective and two community officers, the department is full. Banks hired two officers from Bulgaria to work as interpreters for foreign visitors and help with community issues, such as lost children.

Dewey Beach police has 30 new seasonal officers. The Dewey department is down four officers from last year, but Chief Sam Mackert said he’s not concerned.

“We’re not going to notice it,” he said. Each officer is responsible for patrolling one street and half of another. This year Mackert is focusing on preventing vandalism and criminal mischief, especially in places it occurred last year, he said.

“Our main goal is to proactively deter this behavior,” Mackert said.